

REMARKS

Claims 1-27 are rejected in view of MUROTA and CARMAN. The independent claims are amended to more fully distinguish over the prior art of record.

Independent claim 1 includes a number of limitations that are not shown or suggested by the prior art of record. For example, claim 1 recites, "anonymous recipients, who cannot be identified by examining the email message." The examiner points to MUROTA as teaching the identification of email recipients. However, MUROTA does not show or suggest the concept of anonymous email recipients. This is a central concept of the invention, as suggested by the title of the application – "Method and Apparatus for Facilitating Secure Anonymous Email Recipients". The prior art of record does not teach this claimed aspect of the present invention.

Independent claim 1 is amended to recite, "wherein each entry additionally contains an identifier for the associated public key, but different than the associated public key". Support for this amendment can be found on page 9, lines 7-17 and other locations in the specification. Thus, the claim now explicitly recites that the identifier is different than the associated public key. Of course, the identifier can be a portion of the public key or be derived from the public key, but it is not identical to the public key. Instead, the invention relies upon the processing of a separate piece of information. This overcomes the examiner's position that "The office interprets the receiver's encryption key information as an identifier..." Thus, amended claim 1, which now distinguishes between an identifier and a key and otherwise requires separate processing of the identifier, recites subject matter that is not shown or suggested by the prior art.

Claim 1 further recites, "wherein identifiers for public keys belonging to known recipients are statistically unique; wherein identifiers for public keys belonging to anonymous recipients are not statistically unique". The prior art of record does not show or suggest the claimed identifiers, the concept of statistically unique identifiers, or the concept of non-statistically unique identifiers. Thus, claim 1 should be in a condition for allowance. Claims 2-5 are dependent upon claim 1 and therefore should also be in a condition for allowance. The remaining independent claims include limitations of the type described in connection

with claim 1. Therefore, the remaining independent claims and their dependent claims should also be in a condition for allowance.

In sum, all claims should now be in a condition for allowance. Entry and consideration of the foregoing amendments is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any appropriate fees under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16, 1.17, and 1.21 that may be required by this paper, and to credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 03-3117.

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